YUKON GOVERNMENT REPORT ON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Activities and Expenditures 2003 - 2004

Table of Contents

Message from the Minister	3
Introduction	4
Public Reporting	5
Yukon Investment of Early Childhood Development Funds	6
Early Learning and Child Care 2003/04	11
The Well-Being of Yukon Children	15
Yukon Early Childhood Development Expenditures 2003/04	16

Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present Yukon's third Annual Report on Early Childhood Development activities for 2003/04. This report builds on previous reports released over the past three years. Public reporting enhances accountability, and helps track the progress of early learning and child care in Yukon. This information assists our government to ensure the best programs and services are in place for Yukon's young children.

There can be no better place to start investing in Canada's future than to improve supports for our youngest children. Our increasing understanding of early childhood development makes it very clear just how important early learning is for later development. Over the past two years, our government has made significant progress in the promotion of early childhood development and early learning and child care, and we are committed to building on this foundation.

The accomplishments and investments highlighted in this report are a result of the contributions of government, child care educators and providers, local organizations, First Nations and most importantly, families, committed to ensuring that Yukon children get the strong start in life they deserve.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many individuals, organizations and service providers that are striving to improve early childhood services in our territory.

Peter Jenkins
Minister
Health & Social Services

Introduction

Giving children the best start in life is one of the most important investments we can make in our future. Research shows that early childhood is the developmental stage with the greatest long-term impact on quality of life. Ensuring that all our future citizens are able to develop to their full potential is a high priority for everyone. The Yukon Government continues its commitment to support parents and families to raise children with healthy lifestyles by supporting early childhood development and early learning and child care.

In September 2000 Canada's First Ministers (with the exception of Quebec), made a joint commitment to improve and expand early childhood development (ECD) programs and services to children 0 to 6 years of age.

Priority areas identified for this funding included:

- Promote healthy pregnancy, birth and infancy
- Improve parenting and family supports
- Strengthen early childhood development, learning and care
- Strengthen community supports

In 2003, building on the commitment of the First Ministers, Federal, Provincial and Territorial Ministers Responsible for Social Services agreed to make additional investments in the specific areas of early learning and child care. The resulting Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care supports improved access to affordable, quality regulated child care.

FEDERAL FUNDING TO SUPPORT EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

	YUKON ALLOCATION		NATIONAL ALLOCATION	
	ECD* $	ELCC** $	ECD* ($ Million)	ELCC** ($ Million)
2001/02	288,000		300	
2002/03	370,000		400	
2003/04	447,000	$25,000	500	25
2004/05	432,000	$150,000	500	150
2005/06	428,000	$230,000	500	225
2006/07		$311,000		300
2007/08		$369,000		350
Total 5 Years	**$1,965,000**	**$1,084,000**	**2.2 Million**	**1.050 Million**

*ECD - Early Childhood Development Communiqué funding commitment 2001/02 to 2005/06.
**ELCC - Multilateral Framework on Early Learning and Child Care Agreement funding commitment 2003/04 to 2007/08. Funding for both these agreements flows through the Canada Social Transfer (CST).

Public Reporting

This report fulfills the Yukon government's commitment to report annually on activities and expenditures in early childhood development as well as providing an update on the expenditures and indicators in relation to the 2003 Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care.

As a part of the ECD Agreement and the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care, governments agreed to report annually on their investments. The Yukon government began this process by producing a baseline report in 2000/01 that provided an overview of government expenditures in the area of early childhood development prior to the new federal investment.

Subsequent reports prepared in 2001/02 and 2002/03 provided information on the wellbeing of children using a common set of indicators. The 2002/03 annual report also included baseline information for the Multilateral Framework Agreement on Early Learning and Child Care reporting on expenditures and indicators of availability, affordability and quality of early learning and child care services.

Reports are available on the Yukon Health and Social Services website at: www.gov.yk.ca.

In addition, all jurisdictions' annual reports can be viewed on the federal government website at: www.ecd-elcc.ca.

The common set of indicators used to report on ECD is based on data available through the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth, a national survey conducted at regular intervals. This study provides researchers with a wealth of important data relating to children that can be broken down by jurisdiction. Due to difficulty in maintaining continuity of the longitudinal survey in the North, and the costs involved, Yukon along with the other two territories, has not been included in the study since 2000. Until data becomes more accessible, Yukon is not able to fully report on child well-being based on the common indicators.

Investment of Early Childhood Development Funds In Yukon

Funding from the ECD Agreement is being directed in two key program areas – the Child Development Centre and the Healthy Families Program.

In 2003/04 Yukon government received $447,000 under the ECD initiative to support enhanced programs for young children and their families. The table noted below identifies the financial investments by the Yukon government, and the additional federal contribution.

2003-2004 ECD INVESTMENTS

		Healthy Families Program	Child Development Centre
2000-01	**Baseline Investment**	**$352,000**	**$1,151,000**
2003-04	Yukon Government Investment	$558,000	$1,241,000
	Federal ECD Funding ($447,000)	$315,000	$132,000
	Total Program Expenditures	**$873,000**	**$1,373,000**

Child Development Centre

The Child Development Centre (CDC) is a non-government organization with an independent board of directors. Their priority goals are:

- early intervention to promote and provide the assessment and treatment planning for pre-school children with developmental difficulties
- programs that provide services to enhance the capabilities of families in meeting their child's special needs as well as supporting them in meeting the family challenges of caring for a young child with special needs
- community integration that promotes and supports the delivery of services at the community level in order to enhance the capabilities of communities to support special needs

Highlights for the 2003/04 fiscal year include the following:

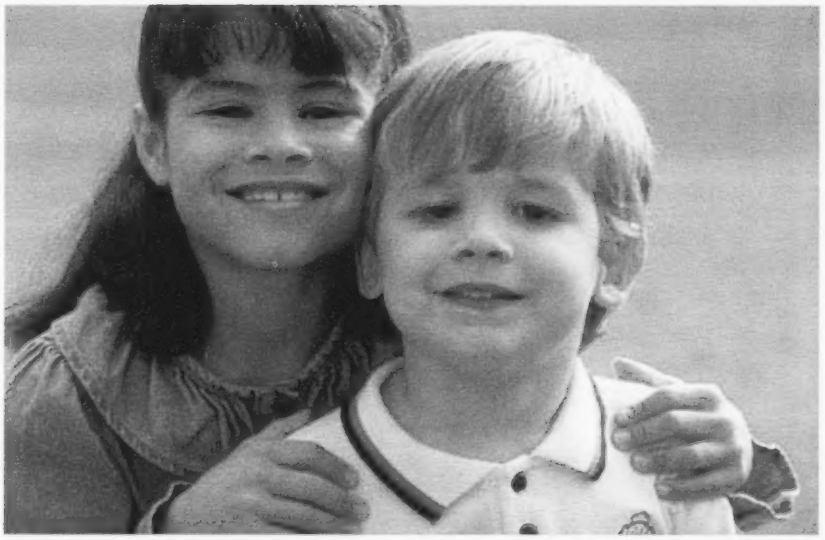
- completion of the preschool curriculum. This is the only preschool curriculum available in the North, and is being introduced to child care programs and Aboriginal Headstart programs.
- continued training in the Hanen program. The Hanen program teaches childcare workers strategies to promote optimum language development with young children. The training includes group classes, individual videotaping, mentoring and one-on-one feedback. It is highly practical, enabling childcare workers to make immediate use of their training. This year 51 workers were trained in Whitehorse, Dawson City and Watson Lake.
- an FASD diagnostic and support team was trained over the fall/winter. The diagnostic team members, who are all CDC staff, consist of a speech language pathologist, occupational therapist, physiotherapist, coordinator and developmental therapist. A diagnosing physician also forms part of the team. Secondary team members are comprised of public health nurses, family support workers and other liaisons who act as a support team to families who receive a diagnosis. The team will start to carry out assessments in the fall 2004.
- Follow Along program – is one of the most popular programs in the rural communities. This program is available to parents of young children (4 months to 5 years) who want to know how their child's physical, language, thinking and social skills are developing.
- Program assistants were hired in every Yukon community to work one-on-one with children in childcare programs or in their homes.

YUKON CHILD DEVELOPMENT CENTRE STATISTICS

	2001/02 Baseline	2003/04
Referrals	521	553
% of Yukon children 0-4 years receiving services	29%	32%
Rural	43%	36%
Whitehorse	56%	63%

Source: CDC Annual Reports 2003

2003/04 Child Development Centre Investment - $1,373,000

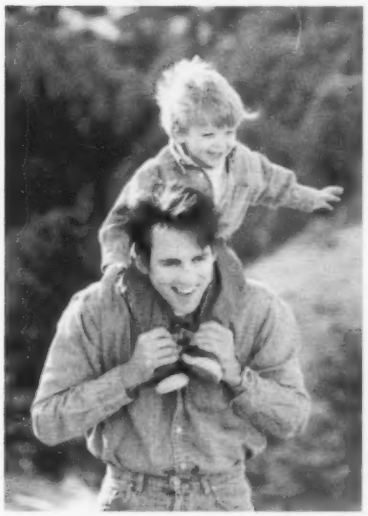


Healthy Families Program

The Healthy Families program is an intensive home-visitation program delivered in partnership with public health nurses and family support workers. The program works with parents to develop their skills to provide the best care and stimulation of their child, in order to promote the well-being and overall healthy development of the child.

The priority of the Healthy Families program is early intervention with children and families that are assessed as overburdened. Research and literature support early intervention as an effective means to prevent unhealthy family relations, abuse and problems later in life, and to promote healthy parent-child interactions.

In 2003 an indepth review of the program over the past five years was carried out. Preliminary data collected for the report reveal positive results and promising outcomes experienced by families and children enrolled in the program. Feedback from participants and the community was extremely positive regarding the impact that the program was having for families. The Healthy Families program is recognized as a much-valued early intervention support system.

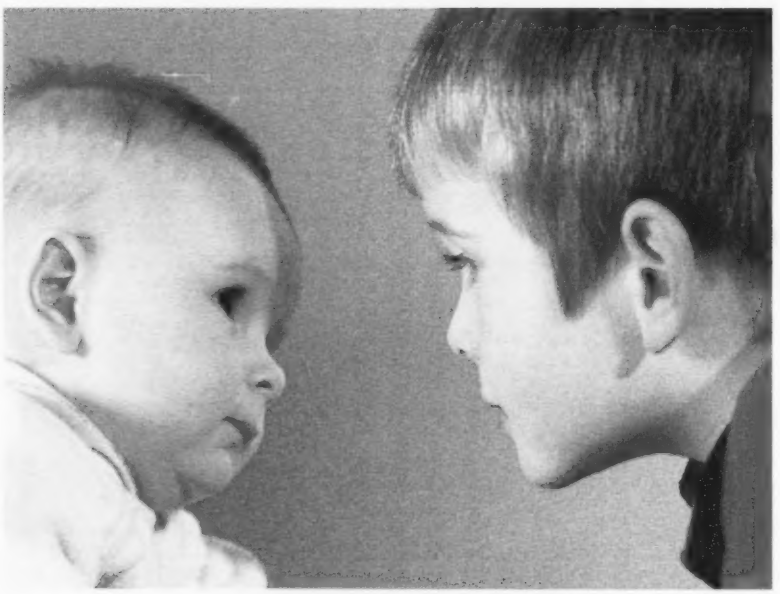


YUKON HEALTHY FAMILIES PROGRAM

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Screened Births	206	251	208	207	184
Positive Assessments	23	47	40	42	49
# of children in program	18	54	76	91	121
Age 0-1	18	40	34	31	28
Age 1-2	0	14	26	27	28
Age 2-3	0	0	16	23	24
Age 3-4	0	0	0	10	21
Age 4-5	0	0	0	0	8
# of families in program	N/A	N/A	73	86	118

Source: Yukon Department of Health & Social Services

2003/04 Healthy Families Investment - $873,000



Early Learning and Child Care 2003/04

The information noted below is provided as a follow up to the Early Learning and Child Care baseline report of 2002/03. Funding provided demonstrates the importance Yukon government places on early learning and child care, and how the additional support provided by the territorial and federal governments has been used to improve accessibility, affordability, and quality early learning and child care programs and services.

		Regulated Child Care Services
2002-03	**Baseline Investment**	**$5,200,000**
2003-04	Yukon Government Investment	$5,525,000
	Federal ELCC Funding	$25,000
	Total Program Expenditures	**$5,550,000**

1. Availability

There is regulated child care available in all Yukon communities through either child care centres or family day homes. In 2003-04 there were 2,426 children between the ages of 0 to 6 years in Yukon, with 73% of these children residing in Whitehorse, and 27% in rural Yukon. During this time, families had access to approximately 75 regulated child care facilities.

	Child Care Centres	Family Day Homes	Total
# of regulated spaces	927	383	1310
Occupancy	83%	85%	83%

Note: Spaces are identified as approximate monthly regulated, full time spaces, and include school age spaces.

Approximately 34% of Yukon children between the ages of 0 to 5 years are in regulated child care.

2. Affordability

In the 2003-04 fiscal year the Yukon government invested over $5.5 Million in regulated child care for children. The charts below set out the direct funding provided to regulated child care by the Yukon government, and the maximum subsidies available.

Yukon Government Direct Funding in Support of Regulated Child Care 2003-04	
Direct Operating Grant to regulated facilities	$2,155,000
Capital Funding	$86,500
Supported Child Care	$34,000
Family Subsidies	$2,959,000

Note: excludes government operating expenses

Fees/Subsidies For Regulated Childcare		
	Maximum Subsidy/Month	Median Monthly Fee
Infant Space	$500	$630
Toddler Space	$450	$550
Preschool Space	$450	$514

Note: fees are for centre-based full-time care

Eligibility for Fee Subsidy (Net Income)		
	Turning Point	Break-Even Point
One parent, one child	$20,424	$32,304
Two parents, two children	$30,060	$51,624

Note: the turning point is the income level up to which full subsidy is available. Partial subsidy is available up to the break-even point, at which income subsidy ceases.

Fee subsidies are paid directly to the child care provider on behalf of eligible parents. Eligibility is determined through an income test. Subsidies may be used for full-time and part-time child care, and parents seeking employment may be eligible for part-time child care for two months.

The subsidy is an entitlement for all eligible families and there is no cap on the number of subsidized spaces.

There is no minimum user fee. Child care centres and family day homes may surcharge subsidized parents fees above the maximum subsidy rate. Subsidies may be used in any regulated for-profit or non-profit child care service.

3. Quality

Knowledgeable and caring staff are essential to the effective delivery of early learning and child care. Yukon is fortunate to have child care educators that strive to deliver quality programming for the children in their care, and Yukon government is committed to ensuring high quality early childhood development programs and services.

The *Yukon Child Care Act* and regulations govern the delivery of child care programs and services in Yukon.

The Act sets out the following group size and staff-size ratios:

Group	Group Size	Staff-Child Ratio
Infant	Maximum 8	1:4
Toddler	Maximum 12	1:6
Pre-school	Maximum 16	1:8

The *Yukon Child Care Act* sets out the requirement that all regulated child care facilities must work towards increased educational levels within their staff. In the 2003/04 year, approximately 72% of child care staff had some level of training, with 28% having achieved the full Level 3 designation.

Child care educators wages correspond with educational achievement. Yukon government recognizes that one of the greatest concerns for child care operators is the recruitment and retention of trained staff. During 2003/04 the government assisted child care operators by increasing funding available through the Direct Operating Grant. This additional funding was directed to increase wages for child care staff and assist with operating costs of child care facilities.

Fully qualified Level 3 child care educators now earn approximately $16/hour, while untrained workers earn an average of just over $10/hour.

The Well-Being of Yukon Children

As part of the ECD Agreement, First Ministers made a commitment to report on child well-being. A common set of outcome indicators was developed using data available through the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth. As noted earlier in this report, Yukon is not included in this survey and is therefore unable to fully report on the well-bring of children based on the common set of outcome indicators. The data we are able to report on is noted below, and was drawn from information provided by the Yukon Bureau of Statistics (Statistics Canada) and the Department of Health and Social Services. Due to Yukon's small population, caution is advised when referring to the figures in the chart below.

Indicators of Well-Being	1999/00 Baseline	2003/04
Healthy Births		
Births in Yukon	363	356
% low birth weights (under 2500 grams)	3.0%	3.1%
% high birth weights (over 4000 grams)	19.0%	17.1%
Pre term birth rate (under 37 weeks)	3.6%	6.5%
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1000 live births)	2.6%	5.6%
Hospitalization due to injury (% of child admissions due to injury per 100,000)	9.4%	3.1%
Childhood Illnesses (# of cases among children 0-6)	1999/00 Baseline	2003/04
Measles	0	0
Haemophilus influenza-B	0	0
Meningococcal C	0	0

YUKON EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES 2003-2004

KEY ACTION AREAS	Baseline 2000/01 ($000)	2003/04 ($000)
1. Pregnancy, Birth and Infancy		
❖ Pre-natal clinics, well-baby clinics, childhood immunizations	328	333
❖ FASD prevention/education	51	50
Sub Total	***379***	***383***
2. Early Childhood Development, Learning & Care		
❖ Healthy Families Program	352	873
❖ Childcare Services	5,335	5,550
Sub Total	***5,687***	***6,423***
3. Parenting & Family Supports		
❖ Family Services	81	195
❖ Children's Services	931	1,442
❖ Adoption	285	338
❖ Yukon Child Benefit	170	162
Sub Total	***1,467***	***2,137***
4. Community Supports		
Contributions to community agencies		
❖ Child Development Centre	1,151	1,373
❖ Parenting/Counselling Agencies	873	892
❖ First Nation Child Welfare	0	65
Sub Total	***2,024***	***2,330***
Yukon Government Expenditures On Early Childhood Development	**9,557**	**11,273**